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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 12 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have pleasure in enclosing the press communiqué of the twenty-fourth special session of the Ministerial Council of the Cooperation Council for the Gulf Arab States, which was held at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 11 July 2001 (see annex).

I would appreciate your issuing the communiqué as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40 and 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jassim M. **Buallay**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 12 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-fourth special session, held in Jeddah on 11 July 2001

On Wednesday, 11 July 2001, the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its twenty-fourth special session in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Bahrain and Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council.

The Ministerial Council reviewed with great concern the deterioration in the situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a result of the persistence of the Israeli Government in using savage methods of repression against the insurgent Palestinian people and of the continued imposition of the policy of closures and sieges with all the grave consequences and repercussions to which it gives rise. The Council cautioned in this connection against the possible outcome of remaining silent with regard to a situation that is extremely dangerous for the security and stability of the region as a whole, and it held the Israeli Government fully responsible for the condition in which the peace process finds itself. It is essential to put an end to the grave violations being committed by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian people while ignoring its commitments and undertakings with respect to the peace process and while violating the resolutions that embody international legitimacy, the norms of public international law and the Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Council affirms the importance of rapid and effective action on the part of the international community and the co-sponsors of the peace process, and in particular the United States of America, in order to achieve peace.

The Council voiced its conviction that it is the settlements that constitute the major danger to security and that are preventing its achievement and the advancement of the peace process, as is stated in the Mitchell report. The Council affirmed that the deterioration that is taking place and the current upsurge in violence can essentially be ascribed to the maintenance of the Israeli occupation and to departures from the agreements concluded between the two parties on the basis of the principles of the peace process that were established at the Madrid conference. The Council calls for the siege imposed on the Palestinian people to be lifted and for access to be allowed to financial resources and to employment opportunities for Palestinians so that the Palestinian Authority may achieve the desired results. Burdening the Palestinian side with obligations without a corresponding commitment on the Israeli side cannot be the way to achieve calm and a halt to violence. The Council also deems the presence of effective international monitoring in the areas of tension to be essential.

The Council condemns the policy of escalation and of widening the circle of violence to include neighbouring countries that is being pursued by the Israeli Government. This policy is driving the region to the brink of the abyss and

threatening its security and stability, and it includes Israel's repeated attacks on Lebanon and on Syrian defence installations.

The Council affirmed the need to follow through on and expedite the delivery of Arab financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority so that it can cope with the grave situation and the circumstances imposed upon it.

The Council urges the Follow-up and Action Committee of the League of Arab States to meet on an urgent basis to consider the possibility of convening an emergency meeting of the League of Arab States to consider the situation and the grave consequences it may have.

The Council further expressed its commendation of the results of the tour of the Arab world and Europe made by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and his intensive efforts during the tour to explain the Arab position on current issues and to affirm the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent State on its national soil with Jerusalem as its capital.